

## A NEW COMBINATION IN *PTILOTUS* R. Br. (AMARANTHACEAE)

by

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### ABSTRACT

Short, P. S. A new combination in *Ptilotus* R. Br. (Amaranthaceae). *Muelleria* 7(3): 369–370 (1991). — The new combination, *Ptilotus eriотrichus* (W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & J. White) P. S. Short is made.

### PTILOTUS

During the compilation of material for a biography of the botanist William Vincent Fitzgerald (1867–1929) it came to my notice that, in three separate papers (Ewart & White 1909, 1910; Ewart, White & Wood 1911), A. J. Ewart and his colleagues adopted, at least in part, the manuscript names Fitzgerald had applied to six Western Australian taxa. In each case they had herbarium material labelled with Fitzgerald's manuscript names and used these specimens as the basis for their descriptions. Fitzgerald (1912) subsequently published his names, as new, in the *Journal of Botany*.

Amongst the names published by Ewart & White (1910) was *Trichinium eriотrichum* W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & J. White. Although adopting Fitzgerald's specific epithet they placed the species in *Trichinium* R. Br., whereas in his later publication Fitzgerald (1912) referred the species to *Ptilotus* R. Br., i.e. *Ptilotus eriотrichus* W. Fitzg. Clearly, as an earlier specific epithet is available, the name *Ptilotus eriотrichus* W. Fitzg. is illegitimate. A new combination is required on the transfer of *Trichinium eriотrichum* W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & J. White to *Ptilotus*.

To date no such combination has been made. Benl (1971) and Green (1981, 1985) have adopted the combination *P. eriотrichus* (W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & White) W. Fitzg. in, I assume, the belief that Fitzgerald (1912) was not describing a new species, but making a new combination. However, this is incorrect, as it is evident that *Ptilotus eriотrichum* W. Fitzg. was published by Fitzgerald without knowledge of Ewart & White's earlier publication.

That Fitzgerald was ignorant of Ewart & White's work is apparent from several sources. Firstly, in his description Fitzgerald (1912) made no mention of Ewart & White's work. Secondly, subsequent to Fitzgerald's paper in *Journal of Botany*, a note regarding the duplication of the publications, presumably by the editor, James Britten (Anon. 1912), was inserted in the latter journal. Of Fitzgerald it stated in part:

'it is right to say that the author is not to blame for this, at any rate in the majority of cases, as his paper had been in our possession some time before its publication, and the species were doubtless undescribed at the time the paper was written' (Anon. 1912, p. 286).

Thirdly, following the latter criticism Ewart (1912) claimed to have made some effort to contact Fitzgerald about the publication of Fitzgerald's names and records that no contact had been made. Unpublished letters at MEL also show that Ewart (1909) wrote in May and August 1909 to Max Koch, the collector of the type material, asking if Fitzgerald's name had been published and whether more material of *Koch 1217* was available. It is, perhaps, not surprising that no response from Fitzgerald was forthcoming. Further letters at MEL suggest that a far from cordial relationship between Ewart and Fitzgerald existed about that time. For example, Ewart (1909), in a letter to J. Staer, refers to the placement of Fitzgerald 'on the Botanical Black list as regard herbarium exchanges'!

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Clearly, Fitzgerald (1912) did not mean to effect a new combination, a situation here rectified:

***Ptilotus eriotrichus*** (W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & J. White) P. S. Short, *comb. nov.*

BASIONYM: *Trichinium eriotrichum* W. Fitzg. ex Ewart & J. White, *Proc. Roy. Soc. Victoria* 22(2): 325 (April 1910). TYPE: 'Cowcowing, *Max Koch*, 1904.' SYNTYPES & ISOSYNTYPES: Cowcowing, Sept. 1904, *Koch 1217*, MEL 1579234; Cowcowing, Sept. 1904, *Koch s.n.*, MEL 1579236; ?NSW *n.v.*, ?PERTH *n.v.*

*Ptilotus eriotrichus* W. Fitzg., *J. Bot.* 50: 22 (1912) ('*eriostrichus*'), *nom. illeg.* TYPE: 'Cowcowing; *Max Koch* (no. 1217).' SYNTYPES & ISOSYNTYPES as above.

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Manuscript received 1 May 1990